

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, January 20, 1880, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. 904 — 14th Street N.W. Washington, D. C. Jany. 20th 1880. My dear Mrs. Bell:

I have been waiting until after the wedding to tell you the whole story. I suppose Alec told you why they changed their minds so suddenly. Maurice found it would take him at least five years to qualify as a lawyer and they were neither of them young enough to wait all that time. Maurice could easily make plenty of money by acting, but neither he nor Papa wanted him to do that, so at last it was decided that he should go out to Germany as head of the International Telephone Co., a new Company which Papa started. Maurice had of course little acquaintance with the business details of the organization of companies, but he has many influential friends in the chief European capitals and in many ways will be of much assistance to the business managers. He is very much interested in the Telephone and a very clever, clear-headed man and we all think he will do very well. A gentleman who called on him was astonished at the knowledge of business he showed and the clear way in which he explained the telephone. The managers were to start last Saturday and Maurice had to go out at the same time if he wanted the position, and he refused to go without Sister nor would she let him. So on Sunday a week ago it was decided, and Saturday she was married. Such a breathless race as it was to get everything ready. Two hundred and fifty "At home" cards to be ordered, stamped and sent out in two days' notice, wedding dresses to be ordered from New York and made up in the same length of time, presents bought, friends invited and 2 received and housed here, there and everywhere, flowers brought from Cambridge and arranged, etc., etc. And all was done, and ready by eight o'clock P. M. only half an hour late. For a wonder Sister had as many if not more presents than I, but unfortunately the room where they were exhibited was so large that they did not show as much as mine did, then a good deal was in jewelry, mine mostly in

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silver. One gentleman who at the time I was married could only afford to send a small travelling clock sent Sister a cheque for five hundred dollars with which a friend bought her a solid silver soup tureen and pair of vegetable dishes, very handsome. Mamma gave Sister as she gave me, all her silver forks and spoons, and I gave Sister a lovely set of diamonds, solitaire earrings and star breastpin. Berta tried to give her a sapphire ring set with diamonds, but there was some trouble about them and she did not. Maurice's present was a pin, a bar of gold from whence hung three stones, ruby, diamond and emerald, the colors of Hungary. Sister looked lovely in a long white satin dress shirred and plaited in long plaits reaching from waist to feet in front and perfectly plain behind. It had Elizabethan puffed sleeves high ruff and long waist, and was we all thought very handsome and becoming. Mamma was exquisite in a long red velvet gown which her mother had made for Mamma's own wedding and never wore again. Mamma is going to give it to Sister and she means to keep it for her eldest child's wedding if she gets one. The bridal party were to have left by the 10 o'clock train for Baltimore, but overstayed themselves and spent the night at Wormley's instead. Then they intended going to New York next day at noon, but Sister says they got tired of each other's society and so came home, and left that 3 evening for New York accompanied by almost the whole wedding party, about enough to fill a sleeping car. Berta and Alec staid over until Monday night and then went on. I longed to go but the doctor forbade, so Miss Blatchford is staying with me until Alec's return tonight. Mr. and

Mr. and Mrs. Grossman sail in the Bothnia Cunard line at 2 today. They go to Liverpool, stop a few days in London and then go to Hamburg. I must not forget to say your present to Sister was a gold bracelet. If the price \$25. is more than you cared to give you might change with Elsie, she gave a gold thimble costing seven dollars. I thought you would prefer the bracelet which was originally intended for Elsie's present, the thimble being an afterthought. You may also like to know that I wore my wedding dress over which a beautiful thread lace shawl, Alec's present was draped. Elsie was at the wedding, and before the ceremony began amused herself by making Mrs. Hayes, the President's wife,

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draw her toy horse up and down. During the ceremony I had to hold her as while Alec had her she kept calling Mamma, Mamma. Even then she was not satisfied and seeing her Auntie Berta beside Sister called Bobelo, Bobelo in a pretty musical way all through.

With a great deal of love to all, Affectionately, Mabel. The minister was a gentleman who had known Mamma as a school girl, proposed to her and her sisters in succession and for some years been very "sweet" on Sister herself!!.